

President's Corner Conservation Is Everyone's Business

by Mark Johnson

It probably comes as no surprise that birdwatching is getting tougher. There seem to be fewer places to go and, when you arrive, fewer birds to find. It's difficult to make sweeping statements, but it is obvious that many species are in decline. This is not a good trend for an organization dedicated to and dependent upon the health of avian populations.

So what can we do? In October, MOS partnered with Audubon MD/DC to analyze conservation needs of birds in Maryland. Several MOS members were in attendance; our Conservation chair, Kurt Schwarz; Alternative Energy chair, Chris Toscano; Anne Arundel Chapter chair, Colin Rees; our vice president, Maureen Harvey; and I joined David Curson, Audubon's Director of Bird Conservation, to share what our organizations are doing and to plot a joint path forward. Currently,

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

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2012 MOS CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 24-26 • OCEAN CITY

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Winter birds. Many field trips, including a Saturday pelagic with **Paul Guris**. Two workshops. Guest speaker **Dave Brinker** talking about goshawks. Wine and Cheese social. Silent Auction. Raffle. Birding friends.

Questions? Contact:
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A Gannet Soars and Scores!

Congratulations to **Marsha Hunt** of Harford County, who wins the 2012 Pin Contest with a very artistic Northern Gannet soaring over the ocean.

(Though there will be no "official" Conference t-shirts in 2012, if you'd like to get a t-shirt, hoodie, etc, imprinted with the winning pin design, we will try to have a logo-type version of the design posted on the MOS Imprint site in January. For details, see page 9.)

—John Malcolm

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CUMBERLAND GAP HAWK WATCH: IN THE HEART OF THE GOLDEN EAGLE MIGRATION PATH

As an avid hawk watcher and counter at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch (in Bedford County, PA), I've often stared at Kinton Knob (elevation 2,540 feet), the northern starting point of Wills Mountain, and wondered how many raptors were using that steep-sided ridge, which parallels the Allegheny Front, for their migration path. I started thinking about how I could help collect information that would complement the counts being conducted at Allegheny Front and reported to the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), and I began looking into the ridges further south in my neighboring state of Maryland for a potential official HMANA count site.



*In the fall, birds fly from right to left, giving excellent loooooong views as they cross the Cumberland Gap.
Photo by Tim Anderson.*

With a little research I found that over the years informal hawk counts have been conducted by various people at Dan's Rock in western Maryland. In fact, the current Maryland single-day record Golden Eagle count (35) was made at Dan's Rock in spring 2008 by Dave Brandes. Dan's Rock is located

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President's Corner *continued from page 1*

MOS has an active conservation group that scans the Federal Register and other media so we can take a national approach in opposing unwise land use and other policy issues that could negatively affect birds or birdwatching. Our letters have scored many successes, since they carry the force of the many members of our society. Additionally, the work of MOS members Rich Dolesh [Director of Public Policy for the National Recreation and Park Association] and George Alderson [author of many letter-writing campaigns] have provided a focused approach to positive avian action. Thanks to Chris Toscano, MOS now has an energy policy to lean on [see below], and thanks to Jane Coskren and her volunteers, we have a second atlas to serve as a platform from which to investigate changes in areas where some species no longer breed, and to protect those areas where the species continue to be present.

Audubon has taken strides in delineating and, through the acquisition of monitoring data, establishing Important Bird Areas (IBAs). IBA maps provided to county land planners have helped support reductions in sprawl in and near those areas. With the advent of global climate change and subsequent sea level rise, Audubon has taken a regional approach to gathering data on our valued salt marsh species, with the aim of establishing areas where significant populations exist. [See *Yellowthroat*, March/April 2011, page 5.] Audubon hopes to continue to conduct counts so as to determine and rank these salt marsh areas for protection, and has expressed the need for help from MOS in these efforts.

There is no doubt that habitats are an important limiting factor for many species. State attempts at controlling sprawl to save the Chesapeake Bay have been difficult at

best, primarily since many relevant decisions are made at the local level. Thus, one suggestion at the meeting was to establish local IBAs, or "IBA-lite" areas, supported with monitoring data, that could be shared with each county zoning board and all interested conservation organizations, to help shelter those sensitive areas from development. Here our birdwatching data, if done properly, could be valuable in delineating these areas.

Further, and most importantly, we discussed the importance of mentoring and increasing youth participation in our organization. This is vital to our survival as an organization and as a society. I therefore challenge each of us to find and encourage at least one new, younger member. It is now time for us to do more than write a check to pay our dues. This is not only in our best interest as a society but also in the best interest of future generations.

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by January 20, 2012 for the March/April 2012 issue.

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ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES AND MOS

The MOS ad hoc Alternative Energy Committee, convened in 2008 and chaired by Chris Toscano, has developed a thoughtful and in-depth *Statement on Alternative Energy* which is to form the basis of MOS policy. Chris Toscano's introduction explains, "As the development and deployment of alternative energy modalities in Maryland is a dynamic process, so too this policy statement must also be dynamic. In fact, this policy statement should be considered to be a "living document" that will be revised and/or appended, when necessary. For example, it is expected that before the end of 2011 an addendum addressing wind power will be added to this policy statement."

You can study the 23-page document on the MOS web page at mdbirds.org/conservation/news/conserv.html.

on the Allegheny Front, about 50 miles south along the same ridge that is home to the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch. But rather than (potentially) counting the same raptors that fly down that front, I opted to try Wills Mountain to the east. Wills Mountain is an anticline that extends north into Pennsylvania's Bedford County and extends south through Maryland into West Virginia and Virginia.

Specifically, I chose Cumberland Gap (elevation 1,200 feet) in Wills Mountain State Park, northwest of Cumberland, in Allegany Co., Maryland. Known as "Lovers Leap" by the locals, this rugged rock outcropping 600 feet above Wills Creek offers a three-quarter-mile break in the ridge, which continues on to Haystack Mountain to the south. Migrating raptors using Wills Mountain have to cross this gap during their long journey south. From this point they go southeast to Knobbly Ridge, south to Haystack Mountain, or southwest to Dan's Mountain on the Allegheny Front. This makes a great jumping-off point for viewing all raptors in the area.

My first day of observing raptors on Wills Mountain was September 22, 2011, and my first day proved to be good. I counted 197 raptors with 11 total species. Of these, 144 were Broad-winged Hawks, a good number considering it was nearing the end of their migration period. I was most impressed by how long I was able to keep the raptors in view as they made their way across the expanse of the gap. Most were flying very low and slow. (In addition to the migrants, the large number of resident Turkey Vultures put on an amazing aerial display, slope-soaring the scree fields below the outcrop. All day they were flying only several feet off the cliff from where I was sitting.) On my first visit there, I was treated to a Red-tailed Hawk that perched on a nearby tree, offering a great view and photos. I had the sense of being in nature,

not just observing, unlike other hawk watches I'd visited.

I ended my day feeling very positive about coming to western Maryland to pursue raptor migration. After just a few days of observing, I realized this location was one that needed to be shared with the birding community. I wanted everyone to experience what this special watch has to offer. I continued to count as many days as possible; I made the hour-plus drive southeast into Maryland on 25 days over a period of 2 months, spending 125 hours—continuing my research validating the site as the one to share with the community and make an official HMANA count site for Spring 2012.

Here are a few of the highlights from the watch so far this fall. On Oct 6 a partially albino Merlin decided to take a run at an owl decoy we had set up. A Peregrine Falcon interrupted its migration to chase two slope-soaring Turkey Vultures before heading back to the skies to continue south. A partially albino Red-shouldered Hawk made an appearance on Nov 4, when fellow counter Ed Gowarty, Sr., from the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch joined Laura Hahn and me for a great day of observation. That day we had a total raptor count of 342, with 9 different species.

As expected, the fall Golden Eagle migration has been productive. As of this writing, we've counted an impressive 70 Golden Eagles over 61 hours of observation, with a daily high of 26 on Nov 11. In comparison, this season Hawk Mountain in eastern Pennsylvania counted 94 in 179 hours, with a daily high of 21 on Oct 30 (HM's second highest daily count since 1966). (The East Coast record for single-day Golden Eagle flight, 62, occurred in Pennsylvania on Tussey Mountain during spring of 2008.) I plan to finish out the season, observing at Cumberland Gap through December 15. And Spring may prove to be even better!

The first "official" count season, Spring 2012, will begin on approximately Feb 15. It is my hope that through the help of dedicated volunteers we will be able to conduct daily counts, posting our results to the HMANA Hawkcount web site, contributing to the study of raptors and their path through Maryland. Currently Maryland has no official HMANA hawk count sites west of Boonsboro (Washington Monument State Park, on the Washington/Frederick county line). Cumberland Gap will be the first.

I personally invite birders and nonbirders alike to come up to Wills Mountain State Park and enjoy the beautiful scenery, make some new friends, and visit this little-known natural resource just outside Cumberland. Together we can create and preserve a place of natural beauty and of great importance for raptor migration as well as other great birding. With the help of fellow birders, we can make this site a success and ensure that these amazing birds continue to soar the skies above the Cumberland Gap in Maryland each year. I encourage anyone who has interest to please visit the blog that I've recently started for count updates, directions, and samples of the views that await you at Cumberland Gap Hawk Watch: www.cumberlandgaphawkwatch.blogspot.com

Hope to see you up at the watch.

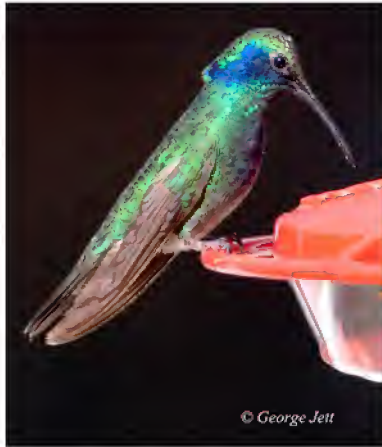
—Tim Anderson

Tim grew up in the mountains of southwestern Pennsylvania. Interested in nature from a very young age, he began to study birds after receiving a bird feeder as a gift; it soon filled with colorful birds, and he began to fill his yard with feeders and bird gardens. A few years later, he experienced a fall migration that ignited his interest in raptors. After several years of hawk counting, he began his current focus on migration paths and habits.



Birds of Note—by Les Roslund

- Hummingbirds provided Maryland birders with their top highlights through the autumn months this year. The most unusual visitor was a GREEN VIOLETEAR—or perhaps it was as many as three GREEN VIOLETEARS!* At least a GREEN VIOLETEAR was sighted at three locations. The first visit was a “one-stop” event in August at a feeder in West River, Anne Arundel County. The homeowner managed to snap a cell phone image for the MD/DC Records Committee, but most people heard nothing of this bird until Committee Secretary Phil Davis disclosed it two months later. The first GREEN VIOLETEAR to stay around long enough for enjoyment by the birding community arrived in Elkton, Cecil County, on Oct 10. Before it left on Oct 12, it provided a viewing treat for several dozen lucky birders, thanks to gracious hosting by Karen and Chris Carpenter. On Oct 24 a GREEN VIOLETEAR showed up in the yard of Diane and Dennis LaPoma in Clarksville, Howard County. Over the next 42 hours many birders attained views and photos, for by then the birding community had learned and shared some important and useful lessons about traffic handling during rare bird visits. The delightful cooperation of Diane and Dennis was greatly appreciated. Since GREEN VIOLETEAR was a new Maryland species, this set of visits will add it to the species lists of all three counties.
- Hummingbird joy in the state enjoyed another burst when the presence of a CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD in Easton, Talbot County, was publicized on November 2. This bird had been around for a few days without attracting much attention; the hosts had been seeing RUBY-THROATS in their yard in late October and “just another hummingbird” seemed no big deal. But several Maryland birders reading the reports were skeptical, since it was so late in the year. One of the skeptics was Dan Haas, who visited the Easton site and took photos on Nov 1. His photos led to confirmation that this was indeed a hatch-year male CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD, and the parade of visitors began. As of Dec 1, more than 130 people have viewed the bird, and it is still present. Hosts Margie and George Steffens are long-time MOS members and highly experienced birders who also hosted a RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD a few years ago. They graciously opened their townhouse to the birder traffic, and with the bird’s cooperation, it has been extensively viewed and photographed by happy birders from throughout Maryland and DC and even from several nearby states.



Green Violetear photographed by George Jett Oct 25 in Howard County.

- SELASPHORUS HUMMINGBIRDS that would have received lots of attention most years have stirred only moderate responses. A very cooperative RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD showed up in mid-October at the home of Kirsten Enzinger in southern Anne Arundel County, and this bird was still present as of Nov 24. Kirsten, another experienced birder, has welcomed viewers and photographers, but the number of visitors has not been large. Several additional SELASPHORUS HUMMINGBIRDS have been reported from around the state, including at least four during the Nov 12-13 Worcester County Rarity Roundup, and another in Cecil County at the Elkton home of Karen and Chris Carpenter.
- Beyond hummingbirds, there really were several other great bird sightings during the mild and balmy days of Autumn 2011. One was a single WHITE-WINGED DOVE, located Nov 13 by Debbie Terry, Bob Ringle, and Scott Hosten at the Castaways RV Resort and Campground in Worcester County south of Ocean City. (See “Rarity Roundup” on page 12.)
- On Nov 20, Sam Dyke located a BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER in Wicomico County, near the intersection of Wells Road and Pemberton near Salisbury. This bird was first seen around 10 a.m. and was seen again around 11:30. After that it could not be relocated, despite the best efforts of several experienced birders.
- Back in October there were two sightings of BELL’S VIREO. The first, on Oct 8, was reported by Rob Ostrowski of Crofton. He found the bird in Assateague State Park, Worcester County, just a short distance up the shell-covered road north of the parking lot. There were no reports of others successfully relocating this bird. On Oct 17 Matt Haffner found and reported a BELL’S VIREO at Turkey Point, Cecil County, near the lighthouse. The bird was happily foraging in the area, and Matt’s thorough directions guided several other birders to successfully view this bird later in the day.
- On Nov 24 two CAVE SWALLOWS showed up at Point Lookout State Park in St. Mary’s County. They were first noticed by Mikey Lutmerding as they circled above the pond near the Point around 7:40 a.m. The next day they were again present at 7:55 a.m., but by 10:30 they were gone; no later sightings were reported. On Nov 27 members of the Patuxent MOS Chapter, on a field trip near Piscataway Creek in Prince George’s County, got a quick glimpse of a single CAVE SWALLOW. Lynette Fullerton spotted the bird and drew it to the attention of others in the group. Dave Mozurkewich of Seabrook caught some of the supporting field marks before the bird passed above the group and disappeared upstream over the marsh.
- On Nov 25 a LE CONTE’S SPARROW was found and photographed at Swan Harbor Farm, Harford County. The locators were Matt Haffner, Jim Brighton and John Hubbell. This bird was quite cooperative as it foraged on the dike of the marshy impoundment west of the blind near the young phragmites. Others relocated the bird on Nov 26 and it was found again on the mornings of the Nov 28, 29, and 30.

**Ed. note: Several experts have reviewed high-quality photos of the Cecil and Howard County Green Violetears; some but not all have judged these to be the same bird.*

MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT AS OF NOVEMBER 21, 2011

BY PHIL DAVIS, MD/DCRC SECRETARY

The MD/DCRC has reached the following record decisions since the last committee status report was published in *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. This report covers MD/DCRC review package 140. MD/DCRC report numbers are in brackets. These records will be addressed in additional detail in a future issue of *Maryland Birdlife*. New "state" species include Golden-crowned Sparrow for Maryland. This increases the number of species on the Official List of the Birds of Maryland to 438.

More information on the MD/DCRC can be found on the committee's web pages at the following URL:

<http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html>

MD RECORDS ACCEPTED:

Long-billed Curlew, *Numenius americanus* [MD/2011-160]

Swan Creek Wetlands/Cox Creek DMCF, Solley, Anne Arundel County
23-May-2011

Eurasian Collared-Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*

[MD/2011-070]
Cecilton, Cecil County
28-Feb-2011

White-winged Dove, *Zenaida asiatica* [MD/2011-006]

Monrovia, Frederick County
09-Jan-2011 through 08-Feb-2011

Golden-crowned Sparrow, *Zonotrichia atricapilla*

[MD/2010-176]
Chesapeake Farms, Rock Hall, Kent County
19-Dec-2010 through 12-Feb-2010

MD RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

Pacific Loon, *Gavia pacifica* [MD/2007-128]

Ocean City inlet, Ocean City, Worcester County
26-Dec-2005 through 27-Dec-2005

Pacific Loon, *Gavia pacifica* [MD/2009-053]

Poplar Island, Tilghman, Talbot County
18-May-2009

Pacific Loon, *Gavia pacifica* [MD/2009-090]

Black Walnut Point NRMA, Tilghman Island, Talbot County
23-Oct-2009

Yellow-nosed Albatross, *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*

[MD/2008-020]
Atlantic Ocean, Pelagic Zone, Worcester County
03-Dec-1979

Anhinga, *Anhinga anhinga* [MD/1997-360]

Riverton, Wicomico County
13-May-1995

Little Stint, *Calidris minuta* [MD/2010-055]

Perryman, Harford County
12-May-2010

Loggerhead Shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* [MD/2011-159]

Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore, Baltimore County
15-May-2011

MEET OUR NEW TREASURER, DAVE WEBB

I began birding in the summer of 1988, jump-started by the sight of a Great Egret while cycling on a lunch break. I started to wonder what other birds I could discover, and that fall I signed up for a birding class at Harford Community College taught by Dennis Kirkwood, joined the Harford Bird Club, and quickly became hooked on the hobby.

I went to school at Virginia Tech as an undergrad, earning degrees in mathematics and statistics. I later earned a Master's degree in statistics from the University of Delaware. I've been employed as a statistician with the Ballistic Research Laboratory (currently part of the Army Research Laboratory) at Aberdeen Proving Ground since 1985. I had the honor of serving on the faculty of the United States Military Academy in 2002-2003.

My wife, Marsha, has been a member of MOS for over two decades as well. Her passion for the hobby comes through in her artwork, which includes decoy carving and quilting. From tolerating the idiosyncrasies of my inveterate listing days, to alerting me to the day's backyard birds, to offering advice during my tenure as an HBC officer, Marsha has always been very supportive of my zeal for birds and birding. Our son, Danny, is also an MOS member who occasionally participates in field trips. He knows more about birds than he'll admit, so when he tells me that he saw a Purple Finch among the House Finches at our feeder, I believe him. I also know that as a teenager he won't admit this to his friends.

Being employed at APG, I've been fortunate enough to participate there in May counts, mid-winter counts, and the most recent Breeding Bird Atlas. I am grateful for the privilege of accessing birding hotspots that are off-limits to the general public. My other favorite place to go birding is Swan Harbor Farm near my home in Havre de Grace. The diverse habitats at this county park attract over 200 species annually. One of my favorite birding rites is to visit Swan Harbor at dusk in late April to hear the bizarre thunder-pumping calls of American Bitterns bellowing from the Ducks Unlimited impoundment.



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

In late October, *Leo Weigant* returned to New Mexico ostensibly to set aside birding and focus on that state's other attractions. And he did thoroughly enjoy what locals call the "most beautiful highway in America" (US 64 from Tres Piedras to Tierra Amarilla, some 50 miles, much of it near 10,000 feet with nary a single advertising sign), but he did somehow happen to remember that he needed three species for his year list. He managed to find a picnic grove where Gray Jays were waiting noisily. He also saw (first time ever) the glories of golden aspen changing for autumn near the Colorado border along the Chama River—and, by chance, two new state birds: a juvenile Broad-winged Hawk and a Wilson's Snipe exploding out of some reeds under snow-capped peaks. On the way south to Abiquiu (Georgia O'Keefe's ranch amid the canyons) he followed the *NM Guide's* suggestion up a back road to Canijol Lakes and just by chance came upon another of his short list: a Red-naped Sapsucker, flying into a tree with a Lewis's Woodpecker. And, after days of looking and hundreds of miles, Leo found his third target, Pinyon Jays, at a brand-new and very promising state park, Cerillos Hills, 15 miles southwest of Santa Fe (where the jays come to visit the only picnic table, along with Townsend's Solitaires). Back "home" near Las Vegas NWR on the very last morning, he found a surprisingly early visitor, a Ferruginous Hawk. Then, there's that new site for Las Vegas NWR up near Mora, the "Wind River Ranch," not yet officially open, but whose combination of brushy river bottom, a prairie where

the buffalo roam, and sandstone canyons will not be forgotten come next spring.

—*Leo Weigant*

HOWARD COUNTY

The Howard County Bird Club's web site continues to expand. A recent addition is the section on the county's butterflies. Much of the information is based on Richard Smith's *The Butterflies of Howard County, Maryland: A Biological Summary and Checklist*. Photographs are extensive and offer numerous views of the butterflies.

Sue Muller's latest adventure took her to the islands of Hawaii. Her plans included visiting National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks along with snorkeling. Kealia Pond NWR was the first refuge her group visited on the island of Maui. The refuge was actually closed because it was Sunday, but the refuge manager came in and opened the gates just for them! It was here that they saw their first Hawaiian Coots and Hawaiian Stilts, both endangered species. Their journey then took them to Haleakala NP and Hawaii Volcanoes NP, where they searched unsuccessfully to find the Nene (Hawaiian Goose), the state bird and another endangered species. However, while at Haleakala NP Sue was delighted to get an unexpected life bird, the Chukar, which posed for photos.

The next island they visited, Kauai, was their last chance to see the Nene. Through various conversations with locals, Sue was told she should be able to see the Nene at Kilauea Point NWR. (As the group headed off, they couldn't help but notice that the only birds were Common Mynas and chickens—extremely large numbers of chickens all over the island. Sue was told the chickens had escaped in 1992 when Hurricane Iniki came directly over Kauai. The chickens were raised not for food but for cock fighting, an accepted cultural practice even though it is illegal. Feral cats, the introduced Mongoose, and pigs continue to be problems. No wonder so many of the endemic birds of Hawaii have become

extinct.) There is a happy ending to this island. Sue's group saw their most desired Nene at Kilauea Point NWR, where the Nene population is 300 strong. They also saw Red-footed Booby, Wedge-tailed Shearwater (chicks in the nest), and White-tailed Tropicbirds! The final stop on Kauai was a beach, where they found two endangered Hawaiian Monk Seals, sleeping and posing for photos.

On Sue's last day, back on Oahu, she toured a coffee plantation. These coffee trees were not shade-grown but acres and acres of trees out in the sun. All of the birds she saw there were non-native species. This reminded her of the importance of buying shade-grown coffee, which helps preserve habitat for native species

—*Kate Tufts*



When Bob Mumford was last in Ecuador, this Oscillated Tapaculo broke all the rules about remaining unseen.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

MBC member and photographer *Bob Mumford* returned in September from his 12th trip to Ecuador in the past four years. He has now spent 120 days in the field working on a photographic book on the colorful birds of that country. He has spotted 707 species and photographed 595 of them. Bob estimates that if he were just birding (rather than primarily photographing), he would have tallied at least 100 species more. For example, on this trip he spent more than three hours just working an Orange-breasted Fruiteater. He considers that 232 of the photographed species are book-worthy—including, from this trip, the ever-elusive Oscillated Tapaculo; he had heard these tapuculos, but this was the first one he had ever seen. He also discovered and photographed

a rare Orange-breasted Falcon in a location on the East Slope where it has never been recorded. In that same general area, his guide relocated, and Bob photographed, a Noble Snipe, a bird not at all expected in that location; this bird successfully fledged two young in that cow pasture. Bob expects to have his book completed within the next year. You can view some of his Ecuador work on his web site: www.naturalings.com.

In September, *Gail Mackiernan*, *Barry Cooper*, and *Sally Wechsler* enjoyed a cruise, with birding at both ends, from Alaska to Korea. They started in Anchorage and stopped in Homer, Kodiak Island, and Dutch Harbor before heading west to the Russian city of Petropavlovsk, where the Russian navy keeps watch on Alaska. After a brief stop there, the ship sailed south to South Korea, passing west of Japan and rounding the south of the Korean peninsula before ending in Incheon (near Seoul). Some of the land bird highlights: In Alaska, Spruce Grouse and Emperor Goose; in Russia, Steller's Sea-Eagle and Baer's Pochard; and in Korea, White-backed Woodpecker and thousands of Baikal Teal, as well as Arctic Warbler (Sally's 4,400th species worldwide). At sea the trio enjoyed species such as Short-tailed Albatross, Mottled Petrel, and Horned Puffin. However, their most exciting find was some 25 Solander's Petrels in US waters north of Attu; this would be the first record for Alaska and maybe the USA! Mammals were also great: Brown Bears catching salmon, American Lynx trotting along the road in front of them, and several Moose watching them as they watched the birds.

Check out the American Bird Conservancy's stunning new publication, *Bird-Friendly Building Design*. Designed by MBC's own *Gemma Radko*, this 58-page book features spectacular, and bird-friendly, architecture from around the world: www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/BirdFriendlyBuildingDesign.pdf.

—Chris Wright

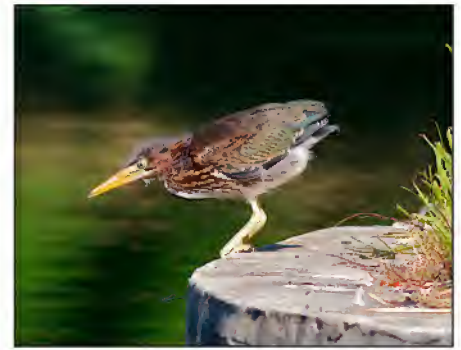
SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Jane Kostenko and *Tyler Bell* worked the ABA conference in Half Moon Bay, CA in late September. This was their 25th ABA event since they started volunteering at the Minot, ND convention in June 1994. Maryland was well represented at the conference. *Marcia Balestri*, *Mike and Joy Bowen*, *Carol Broderick*, *Kathy Calvert*, *Bonnie Mulligan*, and *Helen Patton* were among the 60 participants at this event. The conference ended with a pelagic that most of us would rather forget. Large swells rolling in from the West confused by wind waves pushing from the south created what the West Coasters call a Jackass Sea. Marylanders are apparently a stalwart bunch as none of us succumbed to mal de mer. *Alvaro Jaramillo* coordinated the boat trip and used his secret chum technology, which seemed to work wonders bringing in and keeping the pelagic birds that we suffered for. Close-up looks at the very different western variety of Northern Fulmars, Rhinoceros and Cassin's Auklets, Marbled Murrelets, and Sooty, Buller's, and Pink-footed Shearwaters (and a Flesh-footed Shearwater for some), Sabine's Gulls, and several Black-footed Albatrosses were among the birds seen from the boat. I'm not sure what the species tally was for the event, but the birds, the camaraderie, and the scenery made it a memorable event for sure!

—Tyler Bell

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Pangborn Park, at the north end of Hagerstown, has a pond in the middle of which is a 20-foot diameter grassy island with a single Blue Spruce tree. This past June the spruce was home for a family of Green Herons. *Melanie Fouché* of the Washington County Bird Club (WCBC) discovered the herons, and for a couple of weeks she and several other members checked daily on the progress of the birds. Despite widespread use of the park, the herons flourished on their somewhat isolated island. Word from early (non-birding) observers put the number of fledglings at four; however, WCBC members never observed more



than three. Over a period of about two weeks members spent some very enjoyable hours observing and photographing these birds. They saw the parents feeding the young on an approximately hourly schedule. Each time a parent returned with food, the fledglings emerged from within the recesses of the tree to attend the feeding frenzy. Finally all three juveniles were strong enough to leave the island and join their parents. Many visitors at the park were interested in talking to the WCBC members about the herons, and this provided an opportunity to publicize club activities.

—Karen Field



Washington County's captivating Green Herons pose for photographer Bruce Field.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

will take place at the annual business meeting Saturday, February 25. The slate of candidates, as presented by Nominating Committee chair Helen Patton:

President: Maureen Harvey, Carroll
Vice President: Tom Strikwerda, Howard
Secretary: Janet Shields, Talbot
Treasurer: Dave Webb, Harford

COLLECTIONS PROJECT

As detailed by MOS President Mark Johnson in the November/December issue of *The Maryland Yellowthroat* (page 1), the BBC and MOS have instituted an MOS committee to inventory, assess, and decide the current and future use of their joint natural history collections. The committee, chaired by Karen Morley, includes Bob Ringler, Don Messersmith, Phil Davis, Brent Byers, Joan Cwi, Peter Lev, Patsy Perlman, and Kevin Graff. The committee will recommend a comprehensive BBC/MOS Collections policy to the BBC and MOS boards later this year.

Over the years, MOS and the BBC have accumulated a large inventory of natural history specimens, books, journals and other records. Some items date back to the 19th century. The natural history collections include several large egg collections, mounted birds (many of which are displayed in the Cylburn Nature Museum), bird study skins, nests, butterflies, mammal skulls, pine cones, sea shells, fossils, and rocks. Besides historical MOS records, there are many handwritten field note journals, including those of early Maryland ornithologists Frank Kirkwood, John Sommers, Edward Cook, and William Wholey. There are banding records and slide programs. The library collection includes many books and serials, including *Maryland Birdlife*, *The Wilson Journal*, and *The Auk*.

Most of these items currently reside at Cylburn Arboretum; some are located at MOS sanctuaries. The specimens and journals are available for research and educational purposes, but because there is no catalog or inventory, most people are not aware of this hidden treasure. This lack also impedes professional archival management of these collections. One of the biggest problems is that the storage areas have no independent humidity or temperature controls, although some of the collection is stored in airtight metal cabinets. Light, insects, mold, and moisture pose serious threats to the collections.



An equally serious problem is that loss of associated data—information identifying the origin, date, collector, and other details not evident from the item itself—could substantially reduce the value of the collection for interpretation.

Over the years, members of the BBC have had the responsibility for these collections, including obtaining the necessary permits. Patsy Perlman, Joy Wheeler (MOS Librarian), and Kevin Graff have carefully cared for these materials. But not even those stalwart custodians know everything we have—and maintenance and preservation pose a serious problem. In 2005, Ralph Eshelman, who runs a cultural resource management and museum consultation company in Maryland, assessed the collections for the BBC and the Cylburn Arboretum Association (CAA) relative to creating Cylburn's Nature Museum. He recommended that we expend the human and financial resources to become a proper museum, which would mean hiring a part-time curator, getting accreditation, etc. Since that is financially impossible, the other option is to use the non-research collections purely for educational purposes in the context of a nature center. The research collections could be deaccessioned to a proper recipient.

Last year, BCC members and volunteers Sean Stewart, Catherine Sheffield, and Catherine Bishop again assessed the collections and made the following recommendations:

1. Develop a mission statement (in conjunction with the CAA

educational arm, which runs the nature museum);

2. Prepare a Collections Development Policy that describes the nature (only birds?) and source (only MD items?) of materials to collect in the future;
3. Create a collection-level inventory to see what we have;
4. Establish "intellectual control"—create catalogues, finding aids and other guides that allow researchers to locate relevant materials;
5. Categorize collections by value—research value, educational value, and intrinsic value; and
6. Prioritize collections for preservation and conservation actions and create plan for deaccessioning collections that are not mission-specific or that cannot be properly cared for.



We will apply for grants to help cover the cost of some of this work.

The BBC and MOS accepted these recommendations and the committee has started work. We have already begun the collections-level inventory and are working on the mission statement and collection policy. It's going to be a big job but we are all excited finally to be putting our "house" in order—and it's amazing the treasures we are finding. Check out the 1½-inch tall calendar book advertising Singer sewing machines with beautiful bird drawings, circa 1902.

— Karen Morley
Baltimore Bird Club

Reprinted, with permission, from Chip Notes, the newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club. Photos by Karen Morley.

2011 SUMMER WORKSHOP SCHOLARSHIPS

MOS awarded scholarships to 10 teachers and nature center staff this year; they attended one-week nature programs focusing on environmental education, developing ornithological skills, or assisting with research projects. All programs were held at the Hog Island sanctuary operated by National Audubon's Project Puffin.

The most popular program this year was **Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week**, a new workshop designed specifically for environmental educators; this was chosen by six of our winners. **Timothy Dougherty** is a science teacher and science department chairman at North Harford High School; he was awarded the John Wortman Memorial Scholarship. A Doris Oakley Scholarship was given to **Stacy Epperson**, an education specialist for Aquatic Resources Education with the MD Department of Natural Resources, who also volunteers for the Watershed Stewards Academy in Anne Arundel County. The Chandler Robbins Scholarship recipient, **Heather Hatfield**, is an outdoor educator for the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Environmental Education Center, educating students and parents in environmental lessons that incorporate hands-on learning experiences. **Sheryl Pedrick**, as Education Director of the Ladew Topiary Gardens in Monkton, oversees all education programs, including adult lectures, school environmental education field trips, children and family programs, and summer nature camps. She was awarded the Eleanor Robbins Scholarship. The Daniel and Helen Gibson-Dorothy Mendinhal Scholarship went to **Meghan Sochowski**. She is a Park Service Associate at Assateague State Park and creates and presents environmental education programs as part of overseeing special events in the

park. The Orville Crowder-Donald Messersmith Scholarship recipient, **Nancy Talbot**, a fourth grade teacher at the Woods Academy in Bethesda, incorporates environmental education about Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay, and other ecosystems in a range of topics for her class.

Two scholarship recipients chose the **Joy of Birding** program to develop their birding skills. **Rebecca Byzon**, awarded the Helen Miller Scholarship, teaches Biology and Genetics at Mountain Ridge High School in Frostburg and has been active in many environmental programs, such as coaching the Envirothon and Science Bowl teams. **Clare Walker** is a seasonal naturalist at Patapsco State Park and is responsible for developing and presenting interpretive and nature programs for the public. She received a Doris Oakley Scholarship.

Two recipients attended Road Scholar's **Maine Seabird Conservation** program at Hog Island and assisted with seabird conservation. **Susan Creamer**, recipient of the Frances Covington-Etta Wedge Scholarship, is currently a graduate teaching assistant at Johns Hopkins University, holds a Master of Science in Environmental Science and Policy degree, and has extensive experience as a teacher and coordinator for environmental educational organizations. **Lori Speelman** received a Helen Miller Scholarship. She is a resource teacher for the gifted and talented program and Green School and Earth Force Team Coordinator at Hollifield Station Elementary School in Howard County.

—Tom Strikwerda
Chair, Scholarship Committee

Wanna bee a neditor?

Howzabout a nooze ledder deeziner? These choice positions at the *Yellowthroat* will be open come May. If you think the idea of putting together a newsletter sounds like fun (which it has been for Sue Probst and myself), get in touch with Communications Director Janet Millenson (janet@twocrows.com), or *Yellowthroat* designer Sue Probst (msprobst2@verizon.net), or me (lydiaschindler@verizon.net). We'll be glad to talk it over with you.

—Lydia Schindler, Editor

MOS IMPRINT SITE

MOS members can now order, on-line, anything from t-shirts to aluminum water bottles, and have the items imprinted with MOS chapter logos and symbols as well as images of conference pins. To order, or just explore the options, go to the MOS web site (mdbirds.org). On the right, click on the box labeled "The New MOS Web Store."

THE BIG NIGHT

When the movie, *The Big Year*, opened last October 15, a group of more than 50 MOSers from eight chapters gathered at a Columbia theater to see it together—along with Big Year birder Greg Miller. At the

The movie is Hollywood's fictionalized version of Mark Obmascik's excellent 2004 book of the same name, which details a three-way competition to set a new "Big Year" record. Greg, working full time and lacking the financial resources of his competitors, was the sentimental favorite. (He came in second with 715; the winner had 742.)

Pre- and post-movie in Columbia, as Joan Cwi writes

in the Baltimore Bird

Club's *Chip Notes*, Greg regaled the MOS crowd with his adventures on the movie set. When he was first contacted to act as a consultant for the movie, he thought it was a hoax, but he Googled David Frankel to find that the director was on the

up-and-up and the offer was legit. "When I first saw the cast of stars [Steve Martin, Owen Wilson, Jack Black (playing Greg Miller)], I fully expected quite a bit of comedy," Greg writes. "I also had some trepidation and fear that birders would catch the brunt of the comedic force of Hollywood. Thankfully, David Frankel. . . really loved the book and wanted to represent it well."

Jack Black asked Greg to take him birding one day, so he could better understand the character, Greg told the Columbia group. Jack wanted to know the name of the black bird they were watching. "Red-winged Blackbird," Greg answered. "Why Red-winged?" asked Jack, whereupon the bird flared his shoulders in a fiery display. "Ohhhhh," said Jack.

The movie was warmly received by birders (as was the book). As Paul Baicich wrote in the *Birding Community E-Bulletin*, "Frankly, the film is good to birders. It is about passion for an avocation—in this case pursuing birds—and balancing a near obsession with actual day-to-day living and relationships. The film is well done, and the script is woven in such a way to explain to the non-birding public how many birders operate, from the interested to the totally obsessive."

time of the 1998 race to spot the most North American birds in a single year, Greg was living in Lusby (Calvert County). He chronicled his day-to-day adventures and misadventures with flair on MDOsprey, and his fellow Maryland birders followed along with enthusiasm.

In addition to the "official" screening in Columbia organized by Phil Davis, that same weekend a group of DC birders, as related by Jason Berry, "spent the afternoon splitting our sides with laughter with *The Big Year* movie! It was a funny, sweet film with tons of birding fun." And the following weekend 20-some Montgomery Bird Club members joined up for a jolly viewing in Rockville.





Nonetheless, and despite its big-name stars, *The Big Year* failed to make any headway with the general public. It closed almost as soon as it opened; indeed, it ranks 29th on the list of all-time worst-ever box-office openings. The DVD is due to be released February 22.

The Maryland Connection

Phil Davis and his wife Barbara were on Attu for the same two-week tour in the Spring of 1998 that drew Greg Miller, whom they knew from Maryland. (So was Sandy Komito, the ultimate winner.) Thanks to El Nino and an unusual combination of storms, 1998 proved to be a record year. Another plus, Phil recalls, "When we arrived, the island was covered with more snow than ever before, which drove the birds to openings and edges which helped us find them more easily." The incredible storm and resulting fallout produced so many birds and variety of species that it led Phil to dub it "the trip of the century."

"The birds were incredible, as were the numbers," says Phil. "One of my most vivid memories is after the mid-month storm, standing on South Beach, facing west, and watching waves and waves of hundreds of Bramblings arriving from Asia and dropping down on the ground and rocks as

soon as they arrived, like flocks of little orioles. This was unlike any fallout I had ever seen at High Island, Texas."

Phil also remembers how "Greg was going from Attu directly to Gambell. He had been in such a rush, his winter clothes were purchased from a K-Mart on the way to the airport to catch his flight to Alaska. Some of his gear was not even the right size. Gambell is much colder than Attu, so I loaned him some of my clothes to help keep him warm while up there."

One more item: Greg actually had another species that he never included on his Big Year list. "He was out birding with my wife, Barbara, and he found a Little Stint. As they watched it, he described the field marks to her in detail. However, Barbara had no experience with the species and no other birders were around, so it remained officially "unconfirmed" and he never added it to his Big Year list."



Photos on page 10: (top) MOS birders flock to movie opening in Columbia. (bottom) Greg Miller autographs Mark Obmascik's The Big Year for Patty Craig.

Photos on page 11: (top) In 1998, Greg's fellow Marylanders on Attu included Phil and Barbara Davis. When Greg revisited Attu in 2000, he and the Davises were joined by Marcia Balestri as well as Janet Shields (not pictured). (bottom) Greg drove in from Ohio to enjoy the movie with his MOS pals. (Photos courtesy of Bob Balestri.)

RARITY ROUNDUP, 2011 EDITION

The Rarity Roundup, now in its 12th year, draws birders from around the state to systematically cover all of Worcester County during the peak of November rarity season. Every year brings surprises, and 2011 delivered more than its fair share. The headline bird of the weekend was a White-winged Dove found at Castaways Campground by Debbie Terry, Scott Houston, and Bob Ringler. This western and southern species has been recorded only about 10 times in Maryland and this was just the third record for Worcester Co.

The top bird in the seasonal rarities department was an outrageously late Great Crested Flycatcher found at Assateague State Park by Kevin Graff, Bill Hubick, and Brian Phillips. Nearly all of our Great Crested Flycatchers depart by October, and any November *Myiarchus* is much more likely to be a western vagrant Ash-throated Flycatcher. This was the first November record for Worcester



One highlight of the Worcester Co. Rarity Roundup was this White-winged Dove. Photo by Bill Hubick.

Co. and certainly among the latest for the state.

Perhaps the most mystifying sightings were a total of five field observations of flyby hummingbirds between southernmost Worcester Co. and downtown Ocean City. At this date, it's likely that none of these were Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Not crazy enough yet? One was spotted at night by the lights of an Ocean City hotel!

Other species of note: Northern Parula (first November record for Worcester Co.), Cape May Warbler (new Worcester Co. late date), Blackpoll Warbler, Eared Grebe, Harlequin Duck, American Bittern, Green Heron, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Golden-Plover, Piping Plover, Marbled Godwit, Pectoral Sandpiper, Black Skimmer, Short-eared Owl (one observed in active migration over the ocean!), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Snow Bunting, Orange-crowned Warbler (~10 individuals), Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Clay-colored Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow (a high total of five birds), and Baltimore Oriole.

Thanks to all the participants for another memorable Rarity Roundup!

— Bill Hubick

A NAUTICAL COOPER'S HAWK

I observed a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*) while conducting bird censuses at Poplar Island on August 23 and September 8 and 23, 2010. Each incident involved a crow-sized individual with brown and striped plumage, suggesting a hatching-year female. The hawk, cruising just above the muddy shoreline within an open-water impoundment with a retainer dike slope covered with grasses, captured a small shorebird (peep). The hawk consumed its prey after flying to the nearest shade, created where grass at the base of the dike slope cast a narrow linear shadow along the muddy shoreline.

My attention on two occasions focused directly on a small flock of

shorebirds from which the prey was taken. The ease with which the hawk captured a shorebird was impressive. The shorebird flock appeared oblivious to the oncoming predator until the hawk's fraction-of-a-second stoop to grab an individual. Similarly, other shorebird gatherings along the hawk's trajectory never flushed until the subject flock took flight.

The peculiar occurrence of a forest-hawk on a treeless island 2.5 miles offshore, and its outstanding hunting success, beg questioning:

Was the fledgling forest hawk innocent of forest prey and the cover normally utilized for successful hunting and survival of its species?

How did the forest hawk ascertain prey was available in such an open, barren habitat and, without benefit of cover, devise means to capture unfamiliar, gregarious prey?

Did the reward justify the risk for an undercover forest predator to venture out of its usual element into such barren habitat to pursue unfamiliar non-forest prey?

Were the shorebirds innocent of the form of a forest predator, allowing the hawk to easily approach without initiating alarm?

— Jan Reese
Talbot County

YMOS NEWS



The World Series of Birding

YMOS once again plans to send a team or two to the World Series of Birding in Cape May in May. We are looking for interested youth from grades 6 through 12. Students should be willing to attend several YMOS

training trips in 2012, and be free to participate May 9–13. Experience is *not* necessary—but interest and enthusiasm are required. Parents are welcome to join us as drivers. This is a fabulous opportunity to learn a lot of birds, to work on a team with students who have similar interests, and to be a part of one of the greatest birding adventures possible. Details are available on the YMOS web page at ymos.org. (Information on other youth birding trips is also available on this web site.)

YMOS Summer Birding Program

MOS, in conjunction with Washington College, is again offering offer the week-long Maryland Birds and Habitats workshop. This residential program will take place June 24–29, 2012 at Washington College in Salisbury. In addition to a wide variety of field activities, the group will learn how to use technology to pinpoint bird observations and to report data on eBird. As last year, the program will serve both educators and students entering grades 7–12.

The program is open to participants of all ability levels.

Beginners will receive instruction on both visual and auditory identification. Participants will learn to bird by habitat, and they will use atlasng strategies and technology to document bird breeding. All will also learn how to use eBird to record, store, and access data. The instructors will be Dr. Wayne Bell and YMOS Coordinator George Radcliffe.

Application information and program details are available on the ymos.org web site. Some tuition assistance is available for both students and educators. Deadline for application is April 17, 2012. Applications can also be obtained from George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com.

We ask all MOS chapters and members to get this information into the hands of any potentially interested students or educators. We'd like to have at least one application from each chapter this year.

Chapter Youth Programs

Currently, four MOS Chapters—Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, and Howard—have developed youth programs. Some of the chapters' activities are linked with YMOS programs. We would like to see a youth coordinator at each of the chapters.

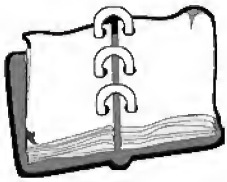
FLICKR PIX

In November Bonnie Ott of the Howard County Bird Club introduced a new outlet for Maryland bird photographers. She has created a page on the photo-sharing web site Flickr, which in its first week attracted 72 members. Called, appropriately enough, "Maryland Birders," it can be accessed by creating an account, for free, at www.Flickr.com.

"My hope is to keep drawing folks from all over the state," Bonnie writes. "Most of the members are not people I recognize, which opens up a new avenue to adding sightings and species to our data. I am also hoping to encourage casual feeder and yard watchers to join and post. . . . Who knows when a rarity might appear?"

YELLOWBOOKS

It turns out that it will be some time before the updated Yellowbook is ready to make its debut. Since supplies of the existing version have run out, at its September meeting the Board approved the purchase of 1,000 more copies of the current edition of this invaluable resource.



MOS Calendar

January-February 2012

Sunday, January 1

✿ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Chesterville.**
Compiler: Maren Gimpel, 912-660-1541 or funkymoss@yahoo.com.

✿ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Patuxent River.**
Compiler: Andy Brown, 410-535-5327 or brownaj@co.cal.md.us.

✿ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Fort Belvoir.**
MD area compiler: Carol Gheblian, 301-753-6754 or gheblian@comcast.net. VA compiler: Kurt Gaskill, 703-768-2172 or kurtcapt87@verizon.net.

✿ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Annapolis-Gibson Island.** Coordinators: Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513, and Hal and Lynn Wierenga, 410-647-7439.

✿ **Baltimore.** Loch Raven. Start the New Year birding. Varied habitats including woods, fields, and the reservoir. Probably also birding other sites for a "Big Day" in Balt City and Co. Meet 8:30 AM along Stone Hill Rd. All cars need to park on the same side of the road. Leader: Kevin Graff, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com or 410-557-2456.

✿ **Harford.** Perryman Area. Celebrate the New Year/recover from New Year's Eve by birding the always-productive Perryman Area with leader Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net. Meet at the Wal-Mart parking lot at 8:30 AM.

✿ **Howard.** Start Your 2012 List. Half day. Plan to carpool to different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year where every bird is new! Meet 8 AM at boat ramp of Centennial Park. Expect moderate walking. Possibility of lunch stop, depending on the weather. Facilities at some spots. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

✿ **Montgomery.** Earliest Bird Walk, Georgetown Reservoir and DC Hotspots. Half day. Start the New Year right. Meet 8 AM at Georgetown Res., DC, by the gate leading to the dike between the pools. Reservations required. Limit: 20. Leader: Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com.

Monday, January 2

✿ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Bowie.** Compiler: David Mozurkewich, 301-459-3375, or mozurk@bellatlantic.net.

✿ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Sugarloaf Mountain.** Compilers: Helen Horrocks (Frederick), 301-831-6315 or hlh_37@yahoo.com, and Janet Millenson (Montgomery), 301-983-9337 or janet@twocrows.com.

✿ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Calmes Neck, VA.** Compiler: Margaret Wester, 540-837-2799 or margaretwester@hotmail.com.

Wednesday, January 4

✿ **Baltimore.** First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Thursday, January 5

MEETING. **Frederick.** Kate Weatherby gave us a short version of this on Members' Night last year, and we asked for more. Tonight we'll get the full program of her trip to Senegal in Jan '11. Meet 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick.

Friday, January 6

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** Matt Whitbeck, a Wildlife Biologist at Blackwater NWR and the other

NWR's in the Chesapeake Marshlands refuge complex in Cambridge will explore "The Wonders and Management of Blackwater NWR." (This precedes a field trip to Blackwater the following day.) 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

✿ **Frederick.** First Friday Morning Trip. Leader and destination TBA. Meet at Baker Park by Culler Lake at 8 AM. Return at approximately 11 AM. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660.

Saturday, January 7

✿ **Anne Arundel.** Blackwater NWR. Wetlands, waterfowl, and Bald Eagles. Meet 8:30 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center. Bring lunch. Leader TBA. For info, contact Kathie Lambert, kbert59@yahoo.com.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY. **Carroll.** Once again hosted by Splinter and Sue Yingling at 70 Ridge Rd in Westminster. If you've never attended before, now's the time to start. Everyone has a good time. 7:30 PM until ? For more info and to coordinate your potluck dish, contact Sue Yingling at 410-857-0902 or syingling@mac.com.

✿ **Harford.** Conowingo. Gull and eagle watch. Les Eastman (410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com) leads this morning survey from Fisherman's Park just below the Conowingo dam on the Harford Co side of the Susquehanna. Meet 8 AM to begin the search for Bald Eagles, with some prospect for a Golden Eagle, various gulls, and waterfowl.

✿ **Kent.** Kick off your birding year with a half-day at Eastern Neck NWR for waterfowl, eagles, and winter landbirds. Colby Hawkinson will also be on hand to provide add'l info about the refuge's wintering Tundra Swans. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net and/or borealdee@baybroadband.net, and

Glenn Dulmage, 410-778-5166 or gdulmage@verizon.net.

Sunday, January 8

Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for winter waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Meet 9 AM at the Nature Center parking lot. Leaders: Bob Rineer, 410-252-6408 or rrineer1@jhmi.edu, and Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

COVERED DISH DINNER AND LECTURE. **Baltimore.** 5 PM at Vollmer Center at Cylburn. Tonight's featured talk: "Changes in Birding in China over 25 years: 1982-2007," with *Don Messersmith*. Please contact Kevin Graff in advance, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com, to let him know you are coming and what you plan to bring.

✿ AUDREY CARROLL MID-WINTER COUNT. **Frederick.** Meet at the Sanctuary at 6:30 AM. You may want or need waterproof boots. Compiler: David Smith, 410-549-7082.

Tri-County. MD and DE Coast. Full day. Search for winter specialties and perhaps a rarity from recent CBCs. Bring a lunch. Dress for the weather. Meet 7:30 AM Ward Museum parking lot. Contact leader Sam Dyke, 410-742-5497, for directions and more details.

Tuesday, January 10

MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** *Sara Rothamel* will discuss "Territoriality and Habitat Composition of Cerulean Warbler Assemblages in Western Maryland." 7 PM in Rm 224 Compton Hall, Frostburg State U., Frostburg.

Thursday, January 12

MEETING. **Howard.** "When Bad Things Happen to Good Birds: The Decline of the Rusty Blackbird," by *Dr. Russell Greenberg*, head of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

Sunday, January 15

✿ FRED ARCHIBALD MID-WINTER COUNT. **Frederick.** Meet at the sanctuary at 6:30 AM. Dress warmly and wear waterproof boots. Contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org, for info.

Montgomery. Waterfowl for Beginners at Black Hill RP. Learn and review the basics of duck ID at this premier county spot for winter waterfowl. The trip will be geared to new birders but all are welcome. Bring a scope if you have one. Meet 7:30 AM at the pull-off next to the south side of Rte 121 bridge. Half day. No reservations needed. For more info or directions, call the leader, Dave Powell, 301-540-8776.

Wednesday, January 18

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "On a Clear Day, You Can See L.A.—Birding Opportunities near the Los Angeles Airports." You're flying into the metropolitan Los Angeles region for business, pleasure, or to catch another plane, and you have some time to go birding. *Jeff Metter* will tell us about some bird-watching opportunities relatively close to each of the metropolitan airports (except Ontario). 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevep@takomavillage.org.

Thursday, January 19

MEETING. **Caroline.** "Alaska," presented by *Wayne Bell* and *Les Coble*. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

Saturday, January 21

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Wendy Alexander, 410-788-4080 or dado1bw@aol.com.

✿ MID-WINTER COUNT. **Baltimore.** To participate in post-migration bird count in your choice of location in Balt. City or Co, call Pete Webb,

410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

✿ MID-WINTER COUNT. **Carroll.** Parties of counters will set their own schedules in their pre-arranged areas, to count resident and late migrant bird species throughout the county. Tally Rally will be hosted by Pat and Bill Ellis at their home; contact Bill at billellis@ellislist.com or 443-520-8809 to verify your bird-counting area, and to say if you will be attending the Tally. Please bring a cash donation or a food item.

✿ C&O CANAL COUNT. **Allegany, Washington, Frederick, Montgomery Counties, and DC.** Contact Peter Vankevich at petevankevich@gmail.com or 202-468-2871 for a stretch of the canal to cover. Each mile of the canal is counted separately. Make-up date will be Jan 22 if the weather is bad. If weather is extraordinarily bad (like winter '09-'10), count will be run following weekend. For Washington County, please contact county coordinator Shirley Ford at 301-241-3020.

Cecil. Ocean City area winter birding. Meet 6 AM at Big Elk Mall. Prepare for a long day and cold weather. Contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net, for info.

Harford. Blackwater NWR. Blackwater is one of the most reliable birding locations in the state. Diverse habitat provides a broad variety of species with a focus at this time on wintering waterfowl. Meet at the Rte 155/I-95 P&R at 7 AM. Leaders are Tom Congersky, 410-658-4137 or jnjtcon@zoominternet.net, and Randy Robertson.

Monday, January 23

MEETING. **Tri-County.** "Birding in Australia and New Zealand" presented by *Mike Walsh* and *Chris Dominick*. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Calendar *continued from page 15***Tuesday, January 24**

POT LUCK DINNER AND MEETING.

Washington. Mount Aetna Nature Center. Pot Luck starts at 6 PM. Bring a dish to share along with your own drink, plate, and utensils. Meeting follows at 7 PM with the film, "A Murder of Crows." Call 301-797-8454 for directions.

Saturday, January 28

H Cecil. Cecil Gulls. Meet 9 AM at North East Town Park. Contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net, for info.

✿ **MID-WINTER COUNT. Harford.** Contact the local compiler, Rick Cheicante, 410-803-2712 or rickcheicante@cs.com, to participate in this opportunity to assess bird life quantity in our area. Feeder counters are especially welcome.

H Kent. Ocean City, Worcester County. Our annual search for winter specialties, including gannet, sea ducks, alcids, gulls, Purple Sandpipers, and wintering songbirds. Full day. Dress warmly, bring lunch and warm beverages. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

Sunday, January 29

✿ **MID-WINTER COUNT. Frederick.** Contact David Smith, 410-549-7082 or lacsmith12@comcast.net, to sign up. Tally Rally at the Smith's.

Wednesday, February 1

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** "Trips to Maine and Canada, including Bonaventure Island and Nunavut" by *Robert Schaeffer*. 7:30 PM at South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg. Contact Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117, for more info.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Speaker: *Joanne Healey*, Adkins Arboreum. 7 PM at Elkton HS, 110 James St, Elkton. For more info, contact President Maryanne Dolan, maryanne.dolan@gmail.com.

Thursday, February 2

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Kent Minichiello*, conservation philosopher, photographer, and naturalist, returns to speak, this time with a program on "Maya Meso-America: Natural and Cultural History." 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660.

Friday, February 3

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "Identifying Gulls in the Region: Making the Difficult Simpler" by *Clive Harris*, Master Guller, Montgomery County Bird Club. 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

H Frederick. First Friday trip. Leader and destination to be announced. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660.

Saturday, February 4

H Anne Arundel. Gull Workshop. Take all that info from *Clive Harris's* presentation at Feb 3 meeting and put it to the test with a gull-watching trip. The location will depend on where the gulls are congregating. Bring lunch. Meet 8:30 AM at Parole P&R located on Harry Truman Pkwy, between Riva and South Haven Rds. Expect to be back in Annapolis at 2:30 PM. Contact: Gerald Winegrad at 410-280-8956 or gwwabc@comcast.net.

H Harford. Bradenbaugh Flats. Enjoy a tour through NW Harford County's agricultural area to find wintering fieldbirds and waterfowl. Expect Horned Larks and Ring-necked Ducks, with possible Cackling Goose, longspurs, and Snow Buntings. Meet at Jarrettsville ES at 8 AM. The trip ends at the leader's house with hot soup. Contact Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or dkirkw@verizon.net for further info.

✿ **MID-WINTER COUNT. Howard.** Compilers: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@comcast.net or 410-772-8424, and Joe Byrnes, LBRoller@verizon.net.

Sunday, February 5

✿ **MID-WINTER COUNT. Anne Arundel.** Take the day off from your usual chores and spend the day at your favorite birding spot hunting down and counting all the birds you can find. Contact Kathie Lambert for details at kbert59@yahoo.com.

✿ **MID-WINTER COUNT. Kent.** Full day. Join the field crew or count in your neighborhood, anywhere in Kent Co. Contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, for more info.

H Montgomery. Winter Waterfowl on the Potomac. Meet at 8 AM in the Swain's Lock parking lot at the end of Swain's Lock Rd. Bring a scope if you have one. Trip will be canceled if icy conditions along the towpath make walking treacherous. For reservations (required) and more info, contact Andy Martin, martinap2@verizon.net or 301-529-2066.

Tuesday, February 7

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. "Birding the Great North: Trips to Maine and Canada, including Bonaventure Island and Nunavut," with *Bob Schaefer*. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info, contact Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, February 8

MEETING. **Montgomery** "A Snapshot of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas—Going Digital" by *George Jett*. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevepretl@takomavillage.org.

Thursday, February 9

MEETING. **Howard.** "All You Need to Know about Herps!" by *Sue Muller*, Howard County Dept. of Recreation

and Parks. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

Saturday, February 11

Baltimore. Henlopen, DE, to Ocean City, MD. Full day. Targeting loons, gannets, sea ducks, Great Cormorants, and Purple Sandpipers. Razorbill possible. Bundle up; this trip is usually brutally cold and windy. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, off I-695 exit 8 (not 8A). Alternate meeting place 9:30 AM at the Lewes-Cape May Ferry passenger lot. Bring lunch. Possible optional extension of trip into Sunday or Monday (overnight at motel in Ocean City area). Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

Frederick. Pt. Lookout SP. Full day. This trip has great potential for unusual or rare birds. Time permitting, we'll search for waterfowl and other winter visitors elsewhere in St. Mary's Co. Leader: Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098.

Howard. How to Find an Owl. Meet 1 PM (possibility of birding till dusk) at Annapolis Rock Rd horse trailer parking lot, midway between Hipsley Mill Rd and Rte 94. Learn how to find owls by habitat and signs. Leader Jay Sheppard is an expert at finding owls and will share his skills and knowledge as to how to find different species. Our targets include Long-eared Owl and Saw-whet. No facilities. Contact Jay to sign up so participants can be advised of weather-related changes. JMSheppard@aol.com, 301-725-5559.

Montgomery. Somerset Marshes. Full day (to dusk). Bring food, water, and warm clothing. Visit the amazingly under-explored wilderness of Somerset Co's marshes. Emphasis will be waterfowl and uncommon wintering species such as Short-eared Owl, Rough-legged Hawk, and American Bittern. Leaders: Bill Hubick and Jim Brighton. Reservations

required. Limit: 14. For reservations and directions, contact Bill Hubick, bill_hubick@yahoo.com.

Sunday, February 12

Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half day. Waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Crk. Boots advisable and scopes useful. Meet 9 AM at Nature Center parking lot. [Directions: exit Balt. Beltway (I-695) at Rte 702 S. Take 2nd exit, Chase/Eastern Blvd. Go 6 miles. Turn right at Marshy Pt. sign. Go 0.25 mile and turn left into parking lot.] Leaders: Bob Rineer, 252-6408 or rineer1@jhmi.edu, and Brent and Mary Byers, 626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

Harford. Loch Raven Reservoir. Explore the beautiful surroundings of Baltimore's premier watershed for wintering migrant songbirds, waterbirds, and raptors. Meet at the MD 147/152 P&R near Fallston at 8 AM. Co-leaders: Dave Larkin, 410-569-8319 or dlarkin@towson.edu and Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net.

Monday, February 13

Washington. Join Judy Liga, 301-432-2276, for this half-day trip to check for waterfowl on the Shenandoah.

Tuesday, February 14

MEETING. Allegany/Garrett. Tom Matthews, a retired wildlife biologist with the MD DNR, will discuss national efforts to improve habitat conditions for woodcock, Golden-winged Warblers, and a host of other wildlife species that have declined due to loss of young forest habitat. 7 PM in Rm 224 Compton Hall, Frostburg State U., Frostburg.

Thursday, February 16

MEETING. Caroline. Program: Movie TBA. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

Friday-Monday, February 17-20

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT. Anyone can take part, from novice birdwatchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes on one or more days and reporting the sightings online at www.birdsource.org/gbbc/. Add'l online resources include tips to help identify birds, a photo gallery, and special materials for educators.

Saturday, February 18

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Ben Poscover, 410-882-1309.

YMOs and BALTIMORE ORIOLES JUNIOR BIRDING CLUB. Dorchester County Youth Birding. Levels: Beginning to Advanced. 8 AM-5:30 PM. The group will meet at 8 AM at the Sailwinds Center immediately south of the Choptank River Bridge in Cambridge. Baltimore group will meet at 6 AM to carpool down to Blackwater. We'll spend time looking at the large array of ducks on the Choptank before heading south to Blackwater NWR, and to Shorter's Wharf to look for Short-eared Owls and Rough-legged Hawk. Bring a lunch and money for dinner and plenty of warm clothing. For more info, contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com. Baltimore Orioles Junior Birding Club members contact Marty Brazeau at 410-583-0275, tropicbirder@verizon.net, for more info and carpooling.

Cecil. Bombay Hook NWR. Meet 8:30 AM Dunkin' Donuts parking lot at Elkton Mall. Snow Geese and ducks. Bring lunch and snacks. Contact Maryanne Dolan, maryanne.dolan@gmail.com, for more info.

Harford. Swan Harbor Farm. Visit this beautiful county park to find wintering song birds and waterfowl. Meet at the parking lot by the Agricultural Education Center at 8 AM. The leaders are Tom Gibson, 410-734-4135 or gibsonltd@aol.com, and John Gallo.

Calendar continued from page 17

Kent. Larks, Longspurs and Others, Kent Co. We'll survey the open fields of Kent County in a search for Horned Larks, sparrows, pipits, longspurs, and possibly Snow Buntings. Raptors and geese as well. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, for more info.

Sunday, February 19

Montgomery. Oaks Landfill, Laytonsville. Bundle up to explore this now-closed landfill adjacent to the Blue Mash Nature Trail. Should be mostly open terrain with some ponds. Possible wintering sparrows, raptors, and waterfowl. Leader will have scope for distant birds. We have special permission to enter this "closed to the public" landfill so reservations are essential. Limit 16. Meet at 8 AM. Contact leader for reservations and more information. Leader: Mark England, 240-207-3132 (home) or 240-375-4500 (cell).

Friday-Sunday, February 24-26

MOS WINTER CONFERENCE. Clarion Resort-Fontainebleau Hotel, 10100 Coastal Hwy, Ocean City. Contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary, at janetbill@prodigy.net for add'l info, or see brochure with registration form at <http://www.mdbirds.org/activities/conference/MOSConf12.pdf>.

Monday, February 27

MEETING. Tri-County. Program TBA. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, February 28

MEETING. Washington. Program TBA. Call 301-797-8454 for further info. 7 PM at the Mount Aetna Nature Center.

Thursday, March 1

MEETING. Frederick. Members' Night! This popular evening features a variety of short presentations of photos, slides, and/or videos from our members. Please let Bob Schaefer know in advance if you want to be on

the agenda. 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660.

Friday, March 2

Frederick. First Friday trip. Leader and destination to be announced. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660.

Saturday, March 3

Carroll. Piney Run Park. Meet 8:30 AM at the parking lot outside the gate to Piney Run Park on Martz Rd. Moderate walking around Piney Run Lake, 'scoping for waterfowl, exploring mixed forest, and checking open field edge for late migrants and winter resident birds. For info, call Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117.

Harford. Broad Creek Scout Camp. Explore diverse habitats of this Harford Co treasure for wintering songbirds and possible raptors. Meet at Dublin ES on Rte 136 north of Rte 1 at 8:30 AM. Co-leaders are Colleen Webster, 410-459-4577 or cwebster@harford.edu, and Sue Procell, 443-417-4919 or suzanne.a.procell.civ@mail.mil.

Howard. Winter Sparrows. Search the wetland and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities. Limit: 12. Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots. Contact Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net or 410-461-336, to sign up and get info.

Kent. Blackwater NWR. Prime wintering waterfowl and eagle country. Perhaps even American White Pelican or Short-eared Owl. Full day, bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, for more info

Sunday, March 4

Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Leader: Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@hotmail.com or 410-465-9006. Facilities available.

Tuesday, March 6

MEETING. Baltimore. Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Program: "Project OwlNet: Revealing the Migration Mysteries of Northern Saw-whet Owls," with *David Brinker* from the MD DNR. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info, contact Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks until Dusk. Joint MBC/ANS trip. Meet at the end of Seneca Rd at Riley's Lock "on the bridge" at 5 PM. After checking out the river, we will proceed to Hughes Hollow to observe waterfowl flying into roost. We will try for displaying woodcock if they are in the vicinity. Bring scope, flashlight, and wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Reservations not required. For more info, call Jim Green at 301-742-0036 (cell).

Wednesday, March 7

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. Carroll. "Finding Rare Birds in Western Australia" by *Don Messersmith*. 7:30 PM at South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg. Contact Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117, for more info.

H Indicates Field Trip

MEETING. Cecil. Program and Speaker: TBA. 7 PM at Elkton HS, 110 James St, Elkton. For more info, contact President Maryanne Dolan, maryanne.dolan@gmail.com.

H Harford. Timberdoodle Search. Join this evening watch for one of our most interesting (and elusive!) birds, the American Woodcock, as it performs its mating dance. Meet 6 PM at the Rte 155/I-95 P&R. The leader is Tom Gibson, 410-734-4135 or gibsonlld@aol.com.

Thursday, March 8

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "The Amazing World of Skunks." *Dr. Jerry Dragoo*, Evolutionary Biologist at the U. of New Mexico and Founder and Director of the Dragoo Institute for the Betterment of Skunks and Skunk Reputations, will tell us all about the natural history and behavior of skunks. His presentation will spray us with factoids about these remarkable but misunderstood creatures. 8 PM at Quiet Waters Park, 600 Quiet Waters Park Rd, Annapolis.

H Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks until Dusk. See Mar 6 listing.

Saturday, March 10

H Anne Arundel. Wooten's Landing for Woodcocks. Last year's afternoon trip was so popular that we're going to tempt fate and do it again! We'll tour the park before camping out at a spot and wait for the woodcocks to appear. Meet 4 PM at Parole P&R. Leader: Kathie Lambert, kbert59@yahoo.com.

H Baltimore. Middle Creek WMA. All-day trip (bring lunch) to visit this major gathering place north of Lancaster, PA for Snow Geese and other waterfowl. There is also an excellent display of mounted birds at the Visitor Center. Note: Trip may go elsewhere if Middle Creek is frozen over. Meet 8 AM at Timonium P&R on Greenspring Dr/Deereco Rd off Timonium Rd just east of I-83. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Youth Birding at Loch Raven. Ages 8-15 with parent. Waterbirds and landbirds. Possible Bald Eagle, Common Loon. Two-mile level walk. Meet 8 AM along Stone Hill Rd. Leader: Marty Brazeau at 410-583-0275, tropicbird@verizon.net.

H Carroll. Woodcock Walk at Audrey Carroll. Meet 6 PM at Mount Airy P&R on Rte 27. The leader will be Ray Bourgeois, 240-285-4331.

H Frederick. Timberdoodles at Audrey Carroll. David Smith will lead us on a search for American Woodcocks. Bring a flashlight. For info, call David at 410-549-7082.

H Howard. Waterfowl Search. Meet at Dockside Parking lot, Lake Elkhorn at 8 AM. We'll carpool to search the Howard Co waterways for ducks, grebes, mergansers, and loons. Chance of an early migrant. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643 or krschwa1@verizon.net.

Sunday, March 11

H Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for winter waterfowl, raptors, passerines. Meet 9 AM. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or dterry12@verizon.net, and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

H Harford. Harford Glen. Experience a variety of habitats and a great variety of birds at this neighborhood site. Meet at the Glen (west end of Wheel Rd) at 8 AM. Co-leaders are Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net, and Ruth Bergstrom, 443-752-1967 or ruthb22@yahoo.com.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Leader: Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net or 410-461-2408. Facilities available.

And then at the Arboretum I was attacked by a groundhog. At least that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

The groundhog's version may go something like this: "I was just minding my own business feeding in the brush, when this guy surprised the heck out of me and I had to make a mad dash to my burrow. The problem was that my burrow was between me and him, about 3 feet away from both of us. I think the guy may have been just as surprised as me as he yelled and then tried to take a few steps backwards (downhill, I might add) and then tripped on some vines and came crashing down on his butt. I really wish I had my camera with me; that fall would have gone viral on YouTube."

— Paul Pisano
reporting from the
National Arboretum,
Washington DC

Book Review *continued from page 20*

plants and for animals (by county) and birds (by season) recorded in or near the park.

"The C&O Canal towpath offers hikers and bikers a superlative, virtually level avenue through nature and history," Shelton writes. At Mile 127.3, he says, a prominent anticline is visible on the berm: a formation called the Devil's Eyebrow. It's an arch of sandstone and shale above a small cave, the "eye." That's just one of the author's tidbits that will lure me back to the canal, with *Potomac Pathway* in my pocket.

— Cecily Nabors
Montgomery Bird Club

LAST CALL

... for the 2012 Conference Feb 24-26 in Ocean City. To check availability, contact Janet Shields, janetbill@prodigy.net.

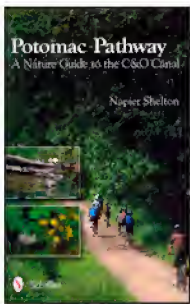
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BOOK REVIEW

Potomac Pathway: A Nature Guide to the C&O Canal, by Napier Shelton • *Schiffer Publishing Ltd.* 2011. 160 pp. \$19.99.



What's 184.5 miles long and less than half a mile wide in most places? It's the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, established in 1971 to protect and preserve the historic and scenic features of the C&O Canal. Most people who have lived a while in Maryland know about Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas and his energetic hike along the length of the canal's towpath. With reporters panting in

his wake, Douglas aroused public and legal interest in saving this much loved area from becoming a highway.

Author Napier Shelton has been enjoying the Potomac River and its environs for more than 70 years. Shelton's first-grade classmate was the son of the Chief of the National Park Service, whose family lived at Lock 7. Shelton explored and played there as a boy. Now a retired NPS writer and historian, he has walked every mile of the towpath. His new book reflects his enjoyment and knowledge of this remarkable park.

Potomac Pathway focuses on the nature to be observed along and near the canal. The first part of the book is a "tour" of the towpath, milepost by milepost, with descriptions of special aspects of natural history to be seen. Sidebars provide information on species of interest or local history. Interspersed are short descriptions of "side trips"

that a naturalist would enjoy near that milepost, such as to the McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area or the Appalachian Trail. Shelton's Side Trip to Green Ridge State Forest is a lovely evocation of this multi-use area, with its shale barrens, winding creeks, and abounding wildlife.

One of my favorite places along the canal is the former turning basin just beyond Mile 22.7—Lock 24 (Riley's Lock), where Great Seneca Creek reaches the Potomac under an aqueduct that carries the canal across it. Shelton describes the turning basin as "a pond attractive to painted and the larger red-bellied turtles and various frogs, along with tree swallows, herons, wood ducks, prothonotary warblers, and other birds."

The book's second part is a series of short essays that cover the whole Potomac Valley. In "Profile of the Valley Forest," Shelton describes the floodplains and above them the terraces that were left high and dry as the river carved itself deeper into its steep-sided valley. In "Managing the Park," he points out that the park is vulnerable to flooding, invasion by exotic plants, pollution of its watershed, and loss of rare species, among other protection issues. Other essays treat geology, floodplain trees, Indian life in the valley, and fishing the canal and the river.

Enhanced throughout by maps and many color photographs, *Potomac Pathway* ends with checklists for